



Daily Report

Sub-Saharan Africa

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Kenya

Rejects OAU Intervention in Rwanda, Burundi

EA0404210595 Nairobi Kenya Broadcasting Corporation Network in English 1600 GMT 4 Apr 95

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] [passage omitted] President Moi said today that unless Rwanda and Burundi stopped the innocent killings [as heard] of people in those countries, the Kenyan Government will review its diplomatic relations with them. The president added that Kenya rejected the OAU conflict resolution force, because it will be used to kill Africans. The president said Kenya believed in the resolution of conflicts amicably in the African traditional manner.

He noted that his day-long tour of Nyandarua District was a great success, and said Nyandarua was now a KANU [Kenya African National Union] zone, judging from the people's turnout in their thousands and their support for KANU.

Catholic Church Leaders Say Country 'Very Sick'

EA0304221295 Nairobi DAILY NATION in English 3 Apr 95 p 1

[Report by Muthui Mwai: "Catholic Bishops Lay It On Line—Kenya Is Very Sick, They Say"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Catholic bishops said yesterday that Kenyans felt betrayed by the current political leadership, which faces a credibility crisis. "It is obvious to all that this country cannot bear the present state of discontent and loss of hope," they said in a pastoral letter.

They added: "Kenya is very sick and the official diagnosis is false and therefore the treatment is not helping."

The 18 bishops also asked the government to stop the further enactment of laws, including the controversial land (amendment) bill until the fundamental issue of constitutional reform had been finalized.

The strongly worded letter said there was a "severe erosion of the independence of the judiciary" and that there was a "terrible breakdown of morality, expressed in ever-increasing lawlessness and violence."

The seven-page letter was read in turns by the Archbishop of Nairobi Cardinal Maurice Otunga, the chairman of the Kenya Episcopal Conference, Archbishop Zaccheus Okoth (Kisumu) and the vice chairman, Bishop John Njue (Embu), during pre-Easter Mass at the Holy Family Basilica, Nairobi. Eleven of the bishops were present.

During the service, Cardinal Otunga told the congregation that his life had been threatened. He said when he went to the United States for treatment his life had been threatened: "If they did not succeed they can do it now. I know what I am talking about. "Since the government

is committed to constitutional reform, we believe that the enactment of other laws should wait until the fundamental issue of constitutional reform has been finalized," he said.

The bishops said redrafting the Constitution must be a well-thought out process. "The Constitution must be prepared and written by the citizens of the country. The role of foreign experts should be advisory and deal with legal issues," they added.

In their letter, the bishops said there was "a real crisis of credibility on the political leadership and this surely the leadership should be aware of." They also said the good image of the police had disappeared. "One sees and reads of nothing but over-reaction, brutal repression, arbitrary arrests not to speak of other abuses. The ruthless efficiency of the police in breaking up any peaceful opposition is in contrast with their inability to fight crime and protect the ordinary citizen from thugs and law-breakers."

They said they were distressed by the recent "resettlement" of the displaced.

The bishops said the government was wrong in allowing violent demonstrations against political opponents. "If the administration allow armed warriors of exclusively one ethnic group to parade through a town or display bows and arrows in threatening postures, even on television what message does that convey to other Kenya citizens?"

The letter said: "The consistent thwarting of political rallies and meetings, all but KANU [Kenya African National Union] ones, must have the disastrous effect of driving the opposition underground. The treatment of non-KANU political activities violates the basic rules of democracy and of constitutional and human rights. "When corruption in high places reaches the level it has reached in Kenya, the inevitable result is a breakdown that touches the whole of society," they said.

The bishops said the time had come for all Kenyans of good will, to say, "enough of dishonesty, of lies, of self-seeking, of bribery and corruption of all kinds."

They added that if all Kenyans refused to pay bribes, refused to pay exorbitant fares for transport at peak hours or grossly inflated prices for scarce goods, those who exploit them would become helpless.

The bishops urged Kenyans to vote only for politicians who could serve the interests of all the people, putting aside all ethnic considerations.

They also said that parliament appeared to exist to serve the interests of the political party in power. "Parliament finds itself in a stalemate that does itself and the country little good. It cannot check the excesses of the executive and, indeed, it often plays a role of complicity in these excesses" they said.

The Catholic bishops said that although the ruling party won only 30 percent of all the votes cast, it nevertheless took 53 percent of the parliamentary seats while the combined opposition, which secured 70 percent of the votes, ended up with only 47 percent of the seats. "It is clear the electoral process needs revision, so that the will of the people, expressed in their voting, may be implemented," they said.

They said the institutions of government, mainly the office of the attorney general, the office of the controller and auditor-general had been weakened. The bishops suggested that the powers of prosecution be hived off [as published] from the A-G's office and vested in an independent director of public prosecution. They said a Ministry of Justice should be created to deal with the political burdens that are presently under the A-G.

They said the creation of the controller and auditor of state corporations had weakened the office of the controller and auditor-general, since the state could now exempt a corporation from the requirements of the state corporations act simply through a "gazette" notice. [passage omitted]

Nairobi Says Concerns 'Misleading'

EA0304205695 Nairobi Kenya Broadcasting Corporation Network in English 1800 GMT 3 Apr 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Following is a government statement arising from matters of national interest:

The government has taken note of the misleading concerns expressed by the Catholic bishops in a pastoral letter regarding perceived socio-political and moral problems in Kenya, as released to the press yesterday and which appeared in today's, 3rd April 1995, press. We wish to clarify as follows:

1. It will be recalled that the Catholic Church actively participated in the events prior to and soon after the reintroduction of multipartyism politics in Kenya, and played a key role in voter misinformation campaign, with some of them causing actual civil unrest, bloodshed, and destruction of our people's individual property.

2. This partisan position adopted by the bishops is not surprising, as Kenyans fully know that some elements in the church have abdicated their spiritual calling and have instead involved themselves in active partisan politics. Indeed, Kenyans are aware of the role played by certain bishops in working with and helping the opposition attempts to incite the population, organize boycotts and other forms of civil disobedience, thereby causing hardship and untold suffering to the people they purport to serve.

3. The bishops should be aware of their role in the enrichment of moral and spiritual well-being and should therefore not pass the buck in their Christian responsibility of being the salt of the earth.

4. The sentiments expressed by the bishops on the alleged lack of independence of the judiciary, without any basis, is in itself interfering with that independence. This is extremely irresponsible for a group professing to champion justice and the rule of law. They have indeed negated their spiritual calling of promoting peace, moral and spiritual uprightness, which includes respect for the rule of law and maintenance of law and order.

Similarly, the attack on Parliament completes their irresponsible condemnation of the three key institutions which are protected by our Constitution; that is: The legislature, the executive, and the judiciary.

5. The bishops should be aware that the current proposals on the constitutional reforms do not preclude the participation of any organization, group or section of the Kenyan population. The proposed reforms will encompass the interests of all Kenyans and not sectional interests, as is being promoted by the bishops. Second, [as heard], any constitutional reform will not take place in a vacuum and must be managed systematically on the basis of the existing one.

6. Kenyans are also concerned at the belated allegations of threats to the life Archbishop of Nairobi, Cardinal Maurice Otunga. Any evidence of such fears should have been reported to the police for investigation. The archbishop should therefore formally report the matter to the appropriate government authority.

7. It is apparent that the statement is meant to divert the attention of Kenyans from the looming leadership crisis in the opposition, which they so strongly supported in the last general election. This in effect is a face-saving act. It should be noted further that the same bishops, with the opposition leadership, have neither expressed concern nor condemned the threats to Kenya's national security from the Uganda-based guerrillas, in spite of the admission of existence of such guerrillas by President Yoweri Museveni and the Government of Uganda. Surprisingly, the bishops and the opposition leadership continue to downplay this real threat to the lives and property of our people.

In view of the foregoing, all peace-loving Kenyans have only one conclusion to make: That the bishops, the opposition leadership, and guerrillas based in Uganda have one common objective, which is to bring down the duly-elected government of Kenya through unlawful means. We wish to reiterate the firm position of the government to protect the lives and property of all its citizens within and outside the Republic of Kenya. This is a responsibility that the government will not abdicate.

Signed: Professor Philip Mbithi, permanent secretary to the cabinet and head of the public service.

Moi Criticizes Bishops' Statement

EA0404163395 Nairobi Kenya Broadcasting Corporation Network in English 1300 GMT 4 Apr 95

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] His Excellency President Daniel arap Moi today said that Kenyan youths were

being clandestinely recruited and trained as guerrillas in a neighboring country to wage a war against their motherland. President Moi revealed that yesterday one person was killed and two others hijacked in the Mt. Elgon region by the guerrillas but, however, he assured the citizens that security personnel were pursuing the culprits. The president also pointed out that, as the head of state, he will continue to ensure that the security of all the citizens and that of their property is guaranteed at all times.

President Moi also noted that he was aware that the opposition was behind these subversive activities, adding that Kenyans fought for independence and not to kill one another, but to develop the nation for the good of citizens. The head of state further cautioned the opposition against their evil designs, and warned them not to instigate any animosity between the Kikuyu and Maasai communities. The head of state was addressing a public rally at Karangatha in Nyandarua District.

The president expressed concern over the Catholic bishops' pastoral letter, which, he said, was unwarranted and meant to drive a wedge between the government and the citizens. He wondered why the bishops never condemned the subversive activities of the self-styled guerrilla leader, Brigadier Odongo, which were to undermine the the peace and security in the country. President Moi further wondered why the bishops never, at any time, showed concern for the senseless massacres of innocent citizens caught up in civil strife in neighboring countries. The president also noted that, as a Christian himself, he had great respect for fellow Christians, but, however, added that it was a pity that a section of the clergy in the country had abdicated their spiritual obligations and instead were pursuing politics. [passage omitted]

Six Mwangaza Trust Opposition Members Arrested

EA0404194095 Nairobi KTN Television Network in English 1600 GMT 4 Apr 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Six trustees of the deregistered Mwangaza Trust were arrested this afternoon. The trustees, including the chairman, Paul Muite, MP for Kikuyu; Kiraitu Murungi, MP for Imenti South; Robert Shaw; Wachira Maina; the trust's executive officer, (Ntaiyiwa Nkuraru); and Stanley Angaine, were arrested at the trust's offices in Westlands, when a contingent of police from Muthangari police station pounced on them.

Confirming the arrests, the director of criminal investigations, Noah arap Too, said he was aware of the arrests, but declined to give details.

And in a statement, the lawyer for the trust, Gitobu Imanbara, said the trustees had gathered in their offices to discuss the ruling by Justice G.S. Pall given on March 27th. Imanbara said the trustees were arrested just before they started their meeting, as they were waiting the arrival of two of their colleagues, Professor Anyang' Nyong'o and Maoka Maore. Calling for the immediate release of the six, Imanbara said the arrests were an infringement of the trustees' basic rights and freedom of association.

Somalia

Degale Merefle Region Declares Sovereignty

AB0304183595 London BBC World Service in English 1505 GMT 3 Apr 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Another region of Somalia has decided to break away. The first was Somaliland in the northwest, which has declared itself independent, and a separate administration is running the north-east. And [words indistinct] the people of southern Somalia who set up their own autonomous region. From Mogadishu, our correspondent, Ali Musa Aseef faxed this report:

The (Digale Merefle) community said it has decided to go its own way and set up a regional administration, because of the failure of faction leaders in Mogadishu to set up a central authority to run the country. According to a nine-page document, issued at a Digale Merefle conference which included opposing faction leaders, they are going to set up a regional administration which would last for two years. They said it was not their intention to divide Somalia. But, according to one community leader: We could not wait any longer for the Mogadishu people. The conference called for the setting up of a local defense and police force to protect the interest of the community as a whole.

The new administration would be based in Baidoa, the capital of Bai region, and would consist of an executive council of 43 members and an 11-strong presidential council. The Digale Merefle community claimed that their people are scattered in the Lower Shebelli region in Bai, Bakal, Middle-Shebelli, Geedow, and Lower Jubba. They claimed they share borders with Ethiopia, Kenya, and the Indian Ocean. Other claims are likely to dispute these claims.

The Digale Merefle community has vowed to implement sharia law in the areas which their administration covers. [Word indistinct] Sheik Ibrahim, a famous lawyer and industrialist in the Digale Merefle community, told reporters today that their administration would deal directly with the international community over matters such as humanitarian relief. He said that the right of minority non-Digale Merefle clans in the region would be protected, but he said, they must follow the rules and regulations adopted by the majority in the area.

Bay Region Opts for Autonomous Rule

EA0404211595 Mogadishu Voice of the Somali Republic in Somali 1700 GMT 4 Apr 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] During the congress for the communities of Digil and Mirifleh, which has been proceeding well in Baidoa, the capital of bay region, the following significant resolutions were adopted:

1. The Digil and Mirifleh peoples have opted for separate regional autonomy, pending the formation of a representative Somali government.

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2. A parliamentary council is to be established.
3. The Islamic shari'ah is to be observed.
4. The number of Islamic shari'ah courts now operating in Baidoa, Bay Region, are to be increased. [passage omitted]

Tanzania

Government Urges Pressure on Rwandan Government

EA0104200995 Dar es Salaam Radio Tanzania Network in Swahili 1600 GMT 1 Apr 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Honorable Cleopa Msuya, the prime minister and first vice president, has called on the

international community to put pressure on the Government of Rwanda to create an environment conducive to enabling thousands of Rwandan refugees to return home from Tanzania.

Speaking to the German ambassador to Tanzania in Dar es Salaam today, Hon. Msuya said Tanzania is full of refugees whose number is now nearing 700,000. He said the influx of refugees has brought about problems in the dispensation of services such as food, which is about to come to an end at any time. He added that the country is no longer capable of receiving refugees. Hon. Msuya said the refugees could return home immediately after the Government of Rwanda guarantees their security once they are back in their own country.

The prime minister thanked the Government of Germany for its assistance to the country, namely the rehabilitation of the Ocean Road Hospital in Dar es Salaam.

Local Voter Registration Moves at 'Erratic Pace'

MB0404101495 Johannesburg *FINANCIAL MAIL* in English 31 Mar 95 pp 49, 50

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Political parties, it seems, are finally waking up to the fact that some of their supporters are eligible to register and vote in more than one place in the November 1 municipal elections.

This may be of marginal benefit for some, but for parties with a large migrant support base, the multiple vote could boost their standings significantly in marginal areas. The thought has not escaped the ANC, whose organisers have been heard telling resident gardeners and maids in Johannesburg's mainly white suburbs to register both where they stay and in the township where they pay rent and service fees.

The Electoral Act allows voters to register not only in the town or metropolitan substructure in which they live, but also in the place (or places) where they pay municipal fees be they rates, rents or electricity and water charges.

Owners of more than one property, for instance, can register and vote in all the towns or substructures to which they pay rates. Of course, if all the properties are ratable to a single council, they would not be entitled to additional votes. On the other hand, if the properties are so far apart that their council areas are not practically reachable on voting day (for instance, a beach cottage owned or rented by a Gauteng resident), the multiple vote would be academic, as postal votes are not allowed.

Voter registration, meanwhile, continues at an erratic pace. A few small towns have reported 100 percent registration; others, such as the Eastern Cape's Cradock and Pedie, had less than 1 percent a week ago.

Large metropolitan centres such as Johannesburg and Cape Town are said to be over 30 percent, though officials cannot agree whether Johannesburg has 3m [million] voters (and hence only about 12 percent registration) or a more likely 1.2m-odd.

Durban, which did not begin registration until March 15 because of a boundary dispute, stood at less than 1 percent last week. Some KwaZulu/Natal rural areas, meanwhile, have still not established local government structures, so have been unable to begin the registration process that is due to close at the end of April.

IFP Launches Registration Drive

MB0304054295 Johannesburg *SABC TV 1 Network* in English 1800 GMT 2 Apr 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The IFP [Inkatha Freedom Party] has launched its official registration campaign for the upcoming community elections. The organization says it has strong support on the ground but believes it could attract even more if it sheds its image of what it calls a purely Zulu-based party of warmongers. Nan Roux has the story:

[Begin recording] [Roux] It was a very colorful turnout of IFP supporters in Bekkersdal near Westonaria on the West Rand this morning. They came from many of the nearby mining towns, each group performing a traditional dance on arrival. The IFP's Themba Khoza said the aim of today's launch was to stress the importance of registering for the upcoming community elections.

[Khoza] Without registration there is nothing like freedom they will see in their lifetime because registration is part of election.

[Roux] Mr. Khoza went on to say that he believed the IFP had the upper hand in the elections but that it could gain even more support if it changed its image.

[Khoza] We should make it a point that we remove that violence stigma from the IFP and also remove that....[pauses] the impression that the IFP is a Zulu organization.

[Roux] On the issue of the IFP's demand for international mediation during the elections, Mr. Khoza said the ANC's negative approach to the issue drew the political battle lines between the two parties, but despite this he said the IFP would still take part in the elections.

[Khoza] There will be a collective approach on this one. The IFP leadership will have to come together and make a position, but I can tell you as early as now we must take part in the election. [end recording]

CP Urges Voters to Register

MB0304210195 Pretoria *PATRIOT* in Afrikaans 31 Mar-6 Apr 95 p 4

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] During a public meeting in Pretoria last Wednesday, Conservative Party [CP] leader Ferdi Hartzenberg made serious appeal to people to register as voters so that they can get as many CP candidates as possible elected to local government. Elected CP candidates, as the only opposition to the ANC/SACP [South African Communist Party]/NP [National Party]/IFP [Inkatha Freedom Party]/FF [Freedom Front] government of national unity's representatives in local government, could then immediately begin pointing out the government's discriminatory practices and launch a struggle to gain independence for the Afrikaner nation through local councils.

Meanwhile, voter registration for the 1 November local elections is in full swing, and the CP wants to inform voters that the onus to register is on them. To facilitate the process, however, the CP is engaged in a campaign to assist voters nationwide. Voters must also remember that 28 April 1995 is the last day to register.

Voters registering in metropolitan areas are reminded they must receive three ballot forms on 1 November. In other areas, they will receive only two.

According to reports from field workers, weekly surveys indicate increasing support for the CP, and this good

news is definitely inspiring the field workers. Readers are urged to provide as much assistance as possible so that the maximum number of voters can be registered. [passage omitted]

CP candidates elected to municipal councils will do nothing to promote ANC policies. They will constantly point out to voters the ANC and other parties' errors, incompetence, and irregularities and, in doing so, make sure that "clean" administration prevails.

In the Western Cape, 400,000 people out of a possible 1.7 million have registered, while about 10 percent of the possible total number of voters in Bloemfontein have registered. On the other hand, the CP is faring quite well at Virginia. In the PWV [Pretoria, Witwatersrand, Vereeniging] Province, about 12 percent of the total number of voters have registered. [passage omitted]

Forms To Be Printed in Papers

MB0504051295 Johannesburg SAPA in English 2046 GMT 4 Apr 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Johannesburg April 4 SAPA—An extensive media campaign for the November 1 local government elections would include the printing in 186 newspapers countrywide of more than five million voter registration forms. Ana Oxlee of Saatchi and Saatchi Klerck and Barrett advertising agency said in a statement on Tuesday [4 April]. She said three million forms would be printed in suburban newspapers.

"The advantage of using local community newspapers is that we can include a list of the venues where people can hand in these forms."

Forms would also be printed in Sunday and daily newspapers, and a million forms would be distributed at election rallies and taxi ranks.

"The campaign is really coming together as we move towards the April 28 deadline (for voter registration)," Ms Oxlee said.

A large portion of the budget was being spent on outdoor and non-conventional media. More than 400 billboards had been erected and voter-education events arranged countrywide. Posters had been placed in 1,500 buses and 640 train coaches countrywide.

"Radio advertising has received a major share of the budget because of its power to reach the rural communities," Ms Oxlee said. "Ads are being flighted daily in 11 languages on 26 stations.

"Television ads flighted on TV1, CCV and M-Net, as well as Bop TV, Mmabatho TV and Transkei TV form a smaller part of the campaign."

Tunisian President Ben Ali Arrives in Cape Town

MB0404195595 Johannesburg SAPA in English 1904 GMT 4 Apr 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cape Town April 4 SAPA—President Nelson Mandela welcomed his Tunisian counterpart Zine El Abidine Ben Ali at Cape Town's D F Malan Airport on Tuesday [4 April] night.

President Ben Ali, who is also president of the Organisation of African Unity, is on three-day visit to South Africa.

Mr Mandela, accompanied by his daughter Zinzi Mandela-Hlongwane, met Mr Ben Ali on the tarmac to a 21-gun salute.

Other South Africa ministers present to meet the Tunisian delegation were Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry Kader Asmal, Minister of Foreign Affairs Alfred Nzo, Minister of Land Affairs Derek Hanekom and Deputy Minister of Constitutional Development and Provincial Affairs Valli Moosa.

The entourage was whisked away in a convoy after a rendition of the national anthem.

Urges 'Contract of Progress'

MB0504110295 Johannesburg SAPA in English 1014 GMT 5 Apr 95

[Report by Enrico Kemp]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cape Town April 5 SAPA—Tunisian president and chairman of the Organisation of African Unity Zine El Abidine Ben Ali has called on the international community to forge a contract of progress with Africa based on partnership and co-development.

In an exclusive interview with the SOUTH AFRICAN PRESS ASSOCIATION, he said the assistance of the international community—particularly industrialised countries—remained critical for Africa to become a full-fledged partner in the world system. "I do not believe that the developed world—particularly Europe—which lies so near to us, can long put up with a marginalised Africa beset by insecurity, extremism and other calamities. This will put their own security at stake."

Mr Ben Ali, who is on a two-day state visit to South Africa, said he had proposed that special attention be paid to Africa's massive debt burden, with foreign debt being either canceled, reduced or recycled into social development and environmental protection programmes. Servicing foreign debt placed a huge drain on national resources and undermined attempts to promote social and economic development. Africa found itself at a crossroads, faced with the challenges of resolving tensions and conflicts while simultaneously preparing for the continent's entry into the 21st century.

The 30th annual OAU summit, which was held in Tunisia last year, had set out to restore to Africans their self-confidence and belief in their individual and collective capacity to solve their own problems. In line with resolutions adopted at the summit, numerous initiatives had been undertaken to promote peace and security, develop inter-African co-operation and make Africa's voice heard in international forums. These include the end of the civil war and democratic elections in Mozambique, the signing of a peace agreement in Angola, efforts

to limit the effect of the GATT negotiations on African economies and Africa's involvement in United Nations summits on population and social development.

The OAU's mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution had, despite its modest resources, "proven to be an effective and operational instrument" and had attracted support from the international community. South Africa is one of eight African states which serve on the mechanism's central organ, which drives the OAU's conflict-resolution and peace-keeping initiatives. The mechanism had succeeded in mobilising United Nations forces in the Rwandan and Angolan civil wars, and an OAU mission was operational in Burundi, where ethnic tension had erupted into bloody conflict between Hutus and Tutsis. A delegation of African ministers is about to visit the Central African state to promote adherence to an earlier agreement signed by all parties.

The Tunisian leader said democracy was "gaining ground" in Africa and democratic institutions were becoming stronger daily. However, such initiatives had to take into account the "special considerations and characteristics of Africa" or risk instability and chaos. "With respect to Africa, democracy should endeavour to be above all a consensus of political forces regarding certain values and orientations on a certain model of society which leaves no place for extremism or exclusion." Democracy relied on a spirit of openness and tolerance and required the active support of all forces and interest groups within a society.

The advent of democracy in South Africa had paved the way for diversified and mutually beneficial relations between South Africa and Tunisia. This included co-operation in the fields of trade, tourism, scientific research and mining. "The geographical distance between South Africa and Tunisia should not be seen as an obstacle, but rather as an advantage inasmuch as each country can provide the other with a bridge towards the development of regional and inter-regional co-operation."

Efforts to build an African economic community within the framework of the 1992 Abuja Treaty were continuing. An incremental approach, with the emphasis on strengthening regional integration through institutions such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA), was being adopted with the eventual aim of establishing an African common market. Mr Ben Ali said the goal of African economic integration was vital in a world where the formation of regional economic groupings and trade blocs had become the order of the day.

ANC Said To Declare 'Constitutional War' on IFP

MB0304141295 Durban ILANGA in Zulu 30 Mar-1 Apr 95
p 9

[Article by Peter Smith: "Notes from the House"—in English]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] If there was any doubt as to the ANC's true authoritarian constitutional intentions in seeking the centralisation of political power, this should immediately be laid to rest.

In its current constitutional discussion document, to be considered at the ANC's constitutional conference on 31 March, the ANC is reverting to positions which any sane South African should recognise as being quite simply outdated and inappropriate to the new South Africa.

In the document, entitled "Building a United Nation", the ANC has effectively declared constitutional war on the IFP [Inkatha Freedom Party], making it perfectly clear that the creation of tame and emasculated provinces remains at the very top of its constitutional agenda. It is perfectly apparent that as far as the ANC is concerned, KwaZulu/Natal, once a Cinderella province, will now become a eunuch instead, and will in perpetuity be compelled to sing the ANC-dominated central government's song.

The proposals are hardly surprising however, and are precisely what the IFP has long anticipated and warned of. Far from extending the limited autonomy, the provinces already have, the ANC is trying to go backwards in reducing it.

Though the language has been slightly moderated in the discussion document currently being discussed, an earlier draft expressly stated, for example, that "South Africa shall be a unitary state", and moreover, that "provincial legislation may not be inconsistent with national legislation." This crude formulation has now been adjusted, but in essence, little has changed.

To make things worse, it appears as if some of the proposals actually contravene the binding constitutional principles. For instance, these principles state that provinces shall have exclusive and concurrent powers (legislative powers were clearly meant to be included), but the ANC dismisses the former with the comment that this is "a fruitless exercise" and that exclusivity should be purely administrative.

Another principle states that provinces should not be in a substantially inferior position vis-a-vis their powers than they are at present—section 126 read with schedule 6 are particularly appropriate here. But this too is blithely ignored.

Instead, the ANC proposes a trade-off by radically weakening provinces' own legislative capacity while "supposedly" strengthening their powers in the Senate—"supposedly" because while the ANC is nominally emulating aspects of the German constitution, it is in reality a total parody of the German system.

This is totally unacceptable, and if accepted by the Constitutional Assembly, is sure to be challenged in the Constitutional Court. Irrespective of its dubious legality it is extraordinarily politically devious.

The point is that this last-mentioned principle was agreed to by the ANC as part of a package that enabled the IFP to enter the elections, but as with the Agreement for Reconciliation and Peace which the ANC has refused to honour, it now seems to be trying to wriggle its way out of this too.

The entire exercise is actually outrageous, and shows the party's desperation to prevent any form of provincial policy-making autonomy. Indeed, it is even meeting with resistance from within, such as from Gauteng Premier, Tokyo Sexwale.

Others may follow suit, but in the end, it is only the IFP that has the political say and clout to stop this rampant evil of centralism at all costs. On the politics of constitution-making rests the future of our democracy, and going by present trends, politics is going to get rather ugly.

ANC Member Accuses Press of Trying To Split Party

MB0304195195 Johannesburg SAPA in English 1933 GMT 3 Apr 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cape Town April 3 SAPA—The white-owned, capitalist press was intent on dividing the African National Congress with a McCarthyite witchhunt against ANC "populists", ANC MP Mr Tony Yengeni said on Monday [3 April].

Addressing about 300 University of Cape Town students in a lunch-time speech peppered with digs at the press, he said it was the "crack force" of white capital.

Criticism was good as long as it was against the government and ANC, but when it turned against the press it was met with venom.

The press, having backed the National Party and Democratic Party in the 1994 elections, had chosen to attack the ANC's most popular leaders in a bid to split the organisation.

Anyone accused of populism was immediately and viciously slapped down, like purported communists in the McCarthy era in the United States. The press had set out present the so-called populists like Mrs Winnie Mandela as being irresponsible and corrupt.

"They've been targeted by the press, and no-one else. The press is the voice of white capitalists, not the poor. It is against the national-democratic revolution. We are not the products of the press. We're made by our people, the struggle. The press will always fail to break the ANC."

When the Supreme Court ruled against a police raid on Mrs Winnie Mandela's home and a violation of her human rights, the headlines did not read "Viva, Supreme Court Judge".

"The headline we saw the following day was: 'She is not yet off the hook'. If they can do that to Mrs Mandela, what can they do to me and you? What is the future of human rights in this country?"

"Those of us dedicated to the fight against abuses of human rights will continue in that tradition ... The role of the press has to be publicly debated, very strongly."

Botswana

Official Denies Occupation of Disputed Island

MB3103141595 Gaborone MMEGI in English 24-30
Mar 95 p 3

[Report by Sechele Sechele]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Recent utterances by the Namibian government that Botswana should remove its troops and flag from the disputed Sedudu border island while waiting for the International Court of Justice [ICJ] to decide on the issue "is deeply regrettable and could heighten tension" between the two neighbouring countries.

This was said by the Permanent Secretary (political affairs) in the Office of the President, Molosiwa Selepeng, in an interview on Wednesday. Selepeng, who was accompanied by his newly appointed deputy, Andrew Sesinyi, (the latter has also served in the Botswana High Commission to Namibia for two years), was reacting to a statement made by the Namibian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Theo-Ben Gurirab during his budget speech in that country's parliament two weeks ago. He called on Botswana to remove its troops and a national flag pending the ICJ judgment.

In the past few weeks, the Namibian electronic and print media has been carrying highly emotive statements over the ownership quarrel over the tiny island, which nearly brought the two countries to war in 1992. Shots were fired over the island at that time and it took the intervention of Zimbabwean President, Robert Mugabe, then chair of the Frontline States, to calm passions. He refereed at a meeting of the two countries' heads of state in May 1992 in Kasane, metres from the island.

In the latest impassioned statement, reported by the Windhoek daily, THE NAMIBIAN, Gurirab said: "Our good neighbour, Botswana, will have to, as soon as possible, remove its troops and flag from the disputed island. The crux of the matter is, there is a dispute over sovereignty and ownership.

"One of the disputants cannot arrogate to itself the right to maintain its armed presence. This would not need to wait for the outcome of the court case". According to other press reports, Gurirab also accused the Botswana government "of collaborating with the occupation regime (South Africa) before independence in a bid to get international acceptance of the island the call Sedudu". The island is known as Kasikili to the Namibians and lies north of landlocked Botswana and east of the Caprivi Strip in northern Namibia.

But according to Selepeng, the dispute between the two countries is over "the boundary between the two countries—where it lies around Sedudu Island, and not the ownership of the island". He denied that the Botswana Defence Force is "occupying" the island and says "our

soldiers go by the island on patrol and as part of anti-poaching exercises when the island is not submerged in water as it does during the rainy season.

"The soldiers patrol it since it is also part of the Chobe National Park and they are not there to guard the boundary because it is disputed or to lay claim on the island. The wildlife anti-poaching unit is over-stretched and does not have the capacity to protect wildlife in the area which is frequented by heavily-armed (who also carry automatic weapons) and well-trained poachers. Cross-border poaching is very common in the area and therefore the BDF [Botswana Defense Force] has been deployed to protect wildlife in the Park". He said Sedudu, which has always been regarded part of the Chobe Game Park, was declared game reserve as early as 1960 and proclaimed park in 1967.

Selepeng confirmed that the Botswana flag has since been hoisted on the Island in 1989 by the anti-poaching unit "as an anti-poaching measure". He said the border between the two countries was set out in the 1890 Anglo-German treaty as well as maps agreed to in an 1892 treaty between Britain, German and Portugal, which defined the boundary as the middle of the main channel of the Chobe River.

"But the poachers are not interested in borders and when they cross the border into Botswana, the policy is to arrest them. In the past, and even today, those arrested protested that they were in Namibia territory and that there is no clear indication of a border. Therefore, the anti-poaching unit decided to hoist the flag so that poachers can be left in no doubt that they are poaching in Botswana.

"These provocative statements by the Namibians can only heighten tension between us and I deeply regret them because it goes against what our three presidents (Robert Mugabe, Sam Nujoma and Ketumile Masire), agreed on in Kasane on May 25, 1992. They agreed on the continued presence of the BDF for the purpose of anti-poaching activities and if they are removed, this goes against their wish. They also agreed that "each government shall politically and administratively impress upon their people to reduce tension between the two countries", says Selepeng.

In the 1992 meeting brokered by Pres. Mugabe, the disputants agreed to set up a technical committee to resolve the matter within weeks.

After more than a year, the experts agreed to disagree and last month, resolved to refer the matter to the International Court of Justice in the Hague.

But according to Selepeng, the issue has not yet come before the ICJ because "the two countries have not yet marshalled representation at ICJ since they have to meet first and agree on modalities of doing that." Also, we had to wait until the Namibian cabinet has been appointed

following the general elections in December and this was not done until Monday this week, says Selepeng.

Mozambique

Opposition Parties To Hold Second Conference

MB0404161495 Maputo IMPARCIAL in Portuguese 3 Apr 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] On 31 March, 10 opposition parties decided to create a technical commission to prepare an agenda for a second national opposition conference, scheduled to be held outside of Maputo in May. The technical commission will also draft a memo of intent to reinforce the opposition's unity and political agreement on important issues facing the country.

The meeting was attended by representatives of the PT [Labor Party], PCN [National Convention Party], PRD [Democratic Renewal Party], Renamo [Mozambique National Resistance], Monamo-PMSD [Mozambican Nationalist Movement-Mozambican Social Democratic Party], Fumo-PCD [Mozambique United Front-Democratic Convergence Party], FAP [Patriotic Action Front], Pacode [Democratic Congress Party], PPPM [Mozambique People's Progress Party], and Palmo [Mozambique Liberal and Democratic Party].

A member of the PCN said the 31 March meeting was "very useful" because "it permitted the opposition political parties to narrow their differences." Monamo-PMSD leader Maximo Dias shared the same view. The principal goal of the upcoming meeting is to form a broad coalition of opposition parties to successfully challenge Frelimo [Mozambique Liberation Front] in the 1996 local government elections.

Zimbabwe Acknowledges Its Dissidents in Mozambique

MB0404123295 Maputo Radio Mozambique Network in Portuguese 1030 GMT 4 Apr 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Zimbabwe Government has publicly acknowledged for the first time the existence of Zimbabwean dissidents living in Mozambique. The Portuguese news agency, LUSA, cites Zimbabwe Vice President Simon Muzenda as saying he has information that several youths from the (Chipinge) region are in Mozambique. Muzenda said the dissidents are convinced they can seize power by the force of arms.

The Mozambican press has reported the existence of armed men inside Mozambique, under the command of opposition leader Edgar Tekere. The Zimbabwe Government had until recently opted to ignore the existence of a dissident movement, whose guerrillas are reportedly living in former Renamo [Mozambique National Resistance] bases in Manica Province. Renamo told our correspondent that it has no links whatsoever with Zimbabwean opposition members.

Namibia

Government Reportedly Killing DTA Member 'Spies'

MB0404122795 Windhoek THE WINDHOEK ADVERTISER in English 30 Mar 95 p 3

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Many DTA [Democratic Turnhalle Alliance] supporters suspected of spying for UNITA [National Union for the Total Independence of Angola] have allegedly been killed by Government agents over the years, the National Society for Human Rights [NSHR] revealed yesterday.

Addressing a press conference in Windhoek Mr Zen-Asser Mnakapa, senior spokesperson for the human rights watchdog said, "Over the last five years many Namibians, especially DTA supporters, have been tortured, abducted and even killed because they were suspected by the authorities of being UNITA spies or collaborators."

He did not indicate how many DTA supporters had met their fate at the hands of the State security machinery nor did he say what cases the NSHR had on hand apart from that of a prominent Kavango businessman and staunch DTA supporter, Mr Faustinus "Kachuula" Dikuwa, who was shot dead last September. UNITA troops were blamed for his death.

"The circumstances surrounding this mysterious act and the subsequent commissions and omissions on the part of the Namibian government suggest that neither UNITA banditry nor any robbery was the real motive for the shooting...."

However, he suggested that DTA members had borne the brunt of the alleged killings because of the party's opposition stance. He noted that the DTA, the country's official opposition camp, was a key critic of the government's policy towards the UNITA movement. No official comment could be obtained from the Government at the time of writing.

Oshakati Prisons Said 'Bursting' With Angolans

MB0404121995 Windhoek THE WINDHOEK ADVERTISER in English 30 Mar 95 p 1

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Oshakati Police Station cells, ideally meant to hold some 240 inmates, are bursting at the seams with almost twice as many prisoners, a great number of them Angolans.

Sergeant Amblosius Shikongo, who is the second-in-charge at the station, yesterday told The Windhoek Advertiser the situation was desperate with as many as 50 inmates confined to a cell designed to accommodate 30 people. Currently, the station was holding 430 inmates.

Most of the Angolans were being held for entering the country illegally and were undoubtedly placing additional strain on the already stretched conditions at the

station. Efforts to find out when these Angolans, as with other foreigners being held for the same reason elsewhere to the country, were likely to be deported were not successful.

Oshakati Police Station only has six proper cells while an additional two blocks have been converted to accommodate the growing influx of prisoners. The situation was compounded by the fact that Oshakati does not have a prison in an effort to save the situation, however, the government has set aside a total of N\$1.6 million for the building of additional cells at the station.

Zimbabwe

Mugabe Declares Independent Candidates 'Enemies'

MB0304205095 Harare Zimbabwe National Broadcasting Corporation Network in English 1800 GMT 3 Apr 95

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] The president, Comrade Robert Mugabe, has branded as enemies members of ZANU-PF [Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front] who have opted to contest as independents during Saturday and Sunday's parliamentary election after losing the primary elections. Comrade Mugabe was addressing party supporters at a campaign rally in (Sokose) high density suburb, where (Patrick Marime) is contesting as an independent against (Sabina Tembani), who beat (Marime) in the primaries. The president said that those who lost in primaries should accept defeat and honor the people's wishes. [passage omitted]

Opposition Leader Rejects Offer To Join ZANU-PF

MB0404080795 Harare Zimbabwe National Broadcasting Corporation Network in English 0500 GMT 4 Apr 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Opposition ZANU-Ndonga [Zimbabwe African National Union-Knobkerrie] leader Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole has turned down an invitation extended to him by the vice president, Comrade Simon Muzenda, to join the ruling ZANU-PF [Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front] Party.

Comrade Muzenda told ZANU-PF supporters during a campaign rally on Sunday [2 April] in Chipinge that if Rev. Sithole does not join the ruling party, it might be difficult for him to be declared a national hero in the event of his death.

Turning down the invitation, Rev. Sithole told ZIANA [Zimbabwe Inter-African News Agency] in Harare yesterday that he is not worried about being declared a national hero because he became a hero long before Hero's Acre was built.

Industrialist Decries Dumping of Chemical Products

MB0404165295 Harare THE FINANCIAL GAZETTE in English 23 Mar 95 p 7

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Lack of measures to guard against indiscriminate dumping of products is threatening the viability of local industries, a chemical manufacturer said this week.

In his annual report, chairman of the Industrial Chemical Association of Zimbabwe, Dr Stewart Cornes, said one example was from a multinational company which dumped products that amounted to about six months of local companies' production.

He decried lack of statistical backing which he said had led to many companies being unable to plan in time to beat competitors.

Chemical manufacturers criticised the Central Statistical Office for producing outdated figures which were not useful to the subsector.

"Until we close the statistical time gap which would lead to rapid responses from the tariff bureau, our manufacturing sector will be under constant threat and potential investors scared away.

"This information would also be very useful to Zimbabwean chemical companies that are or wish to produce products that are substituting foreign imports. They would require security against the scourge of dumping and so would their investors," he said.

Some of the finished products flooding the Zimbabwean market were from South Africa and had superior packaging besides being cheaper than locally produced products.

This has led to manufacturers calling on government to ensure that when a comprehensive trade agreements between Zimbabwe and South Africa is finalised, the issue of the dumping of chemical products be taken note of. Cornes conceded that competition was increasing in the chemical manufacturing sector resulting in reduction, in real terms, of prices of products.

However, he said the major constraints to real growth in the sector were high levels of inflation, high interest rates and the removal of export incentives.

Benin**Opposition Wins 'Landslide' Election Victory***LD0204152395 Paris Radio France International in French 1230 GMT 2 Apr 95*

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] It has been confirmed that the parties opposing President Soglo have won a landslide victory in the general elections that were held last Tuesday [28 March] in Benin. These are the first results only, but this victory seems to be a reality, to the detriment of the head of state. Our correspondent in Benin, Jean-Luc Aplogan, reports:

[Aplogan] The man who managed to create a politically correct image for himself since the national conference has surprisingly lost a lot of ground. After these elections, the popularity of Professor Albert Tevodjre has fallen to a record low. He has won only four of the 83 seats—often by a close shave—including his own in his Porto-Novo stronghold. Voters in that departement in the southeast of the country shifted en masse in favor of Adrien Houngbedji's Democratic Renewal Party [PRD]. [passage omitted]

Politicians Haggle Over New Government*AB0304165695 Paris AFP in English 1240 GMT 3 Apr 95*

[By Anne Le Coz]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cotonou, April 3 (AFP)—Politicians in Benin haggled Monday [3 April] over forming a new government after opponents of President Nicéphore Soglo won a clear parliamentary majority in general elections held last week.

With only two results in the 83-seat national assembly still to be released by the independent electoral commission, the opposition had won 49 seats while Soglo's supporters took 32.

Intensive discussions were taking place in the corridors of power and analysts said it was too early to forecast the shape of an eventual coalition, given that 19 parties or coalition groupings had won seats.

Soglo called early elections for last Tuesday after losing his parliamentary majority in October last year because of defections due to his economic austerity measures.

He was elected president on the West African country's return to democracy in 1991, when he defeated the longtime Marxist military ruler Mathieu Kerekou at the polls after a transition period.

His main apparent rival on Monday's figures was outgoing parliamentary speaker Adrien Houngbedji, leader of the Democratic Renewal Party (PRD), which has taken 18 seats. It had five in the outgoing parliament.

A surprise in opposition ranks has been second place going to Kerekou's Action Front for Renewal and Development (FARD-Alafia), which took 12 seats but had none in the previous assembly.

Observers said that the 12 FARD-Alafia deputies were being approached by both sides on Monday.

Informed sources said that Soglo's own Benin Renaissance Party (PR) would be ready to give one of them the post of parliamentary speaker in exchange for their political backing or, at the least, neutrality.

PR remained the largest single group in the national assembly, with 20 seats, backed by an array of candidates from seven other groupings who had a total of 12. They have set conditions for their formal support.

In opposition ranks, the Our Common Cause (NCC) party of Albert Tevodjre, hitherto considered of equal standing with the PRD, was battered at the polls and took only three seats.

Sources, however, said that Tevodjre was also trying to strike a deal with Kerekou's supporters in a bid to block Houngbedji's reappointment as speaker, and in the longer term to place the NCC leader in the running for presidential elections to be held next year.

Liberia**Fresh Fighting Breaks Out Between ULIMO Factions***AB0404173795 London BBC World Service in English 1505 GMT 4 Apr 95*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A fierce battle is being fought in Liberia for control of Tubmanburg, the headquarters of ULIMO [United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia] between the force of Alhaji Koromah and Roosevelt Johnson. From Monrovia, our correspondent Nyenati Allison telexed this report:

Fresh fighting has broken out on the northwestern Tubmanburg Highway, forcing the closure of the road to normal traffic. A Planned relief convoy of much needed food and medicine to 11,000 displaced people around Tubmanburg has been suspended due to the fighting. Peace-keeping sources on the highway said that this fresh round of fighting broke out yesterday with the exchange of heavy bombardment between rival factions of ULIMO. They said that a misdirected rocket propelled grenade exploded near peace-keeping troop positions at the Po River Bridge, about 11 miles north west of Monrovia. No casualties were reported. Small arms fire was heard this morning as the fighting flared up around the southern banks of the Po River, sparking off a wave of civilians fleeing in all directions. Others dashed for cover to avoid flying bullets.

Peace-keeping troops later discovered that a mini-bus loaded with assault rifles and hand grenades in the

market had been used as an arsenal by Roosevelt Johnson's faction. Peace-keeping officers who arrived near the bridge, as the exchange of heavy bombardments echoed in the surrounding forest, told journalists that the highway has been closed to normal traffic. These rebels are never going to stop fighting, one peace-keeping officer said. The only solution is peace enforcement. There were also reports this morning of skirmishes between the two ULIMO factions around Suehn Township some 18 miles north west of Monrovia.

TLA Meets With Warring Faction Heads

AB0504115995 Monrovia Radio ELBC in English 0900 GMT 5 Apr 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The three-man visitation committee recently constituted by the speaker of the TLA [Transitional Legislative Assembly] yesterday began meeting with leaders of warring factions and councilmen-designate of the incoming Council of State. According to a release from the press bureau of the TLA, the three-member committee yesterday met with councilmen-designate, Lieutenant General J. Hezekiah Bowen and ULIMO-J [United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia-Johnson] leader, Gen. Roosevelt Johnson. Although details of the discussions weren't disclosed, a schedule from the press bureau of the TLA revealed that the committee is to travel to the Republic of Guinea today to meet ULIMO-K leader, Gen. Alhaji Koromah between 5 through 7 April.

The release further states that the TLA committee is to meet with the NPFL [National Patriotic Front of Liberia] leader, Mr. Charles Taylor on 8 April, while it is to meet with the LPC [Liberian Peace Council] George Boley, Mr. Tom Woewiyu of the NPFL-CRC [Central Revolutionary Council], and councilmen-designate of the Liberian National Conference on 10 April. The leader of the Lofa Defense Council, Mr. Francois Massquoi will be met on 11 April. The letter signed by the TLA speaker, Morris Dukuly, pointed out that specific concerns and proposals derived from these meetings will enable the Assembly expand the depth and scope of the Assembly's outlook on the Liberian peace process that will lead to an acceptable formula for peace. At the end of the exercise, the release continued, a resolution will be passed reflecting the Assembly position for leading this country to final and durable peace.

Niger

Armed Rebel Movements Form New Organization

AB3003175695 Niamey Voix du Sahel Network in French 1200 GMT 30 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Niger armed rebel movement now has a new political organization, known as the Armed Resistance Organization [Organisation de la Resistance Armee, ORA], which will henceforth replace the Coordination of the Armed Resistance. The ORA is

led by Rhissa Ag Boula, who is also the leader of the Front for the Liberation of Air and Azaouak. The formation of this new organization, composed of the country's six Tuareg rebel movements, was announced yesterday in Ouagadougou, where peace negotiations are being held between the Niger Government and the rebels.

The two sides are currently trying to finalize a peace agreement aimed at putting a definitive end to the armed rebellion in northern Niger. This is being done under the auspices of Algerian, French, and Burkinabe mediators. [passage omitted]

Tuareg Leader on ORA's Aims

LD3003144995 Paris Radio France International in French 0630 GMT 30 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] After 24 hours of prevarication, the negotiations between the government and the Tuareg rebels of Niger finally began in Ouagadougou yesterday afternoon. [passage omitted]

Yesterday the Tuareg movements set up a new coordinating body: the ORA—the Organization of the Armed Resistance—which replaces the CRA [Coordinating Body of the Armed Resistance], which split apart three months ago. Rhissa Boula, the new head of this new structure, gave us an explanation. He was contacted in the Burkinabe capital by Muriel Pomponne:

[Begin recording] [Boula] The new structure has taken on the aims of the CRA, the aims conceived by the CRA, which are the aims of the resistance, and the new structure has taken on the earlier commitments made by the CRA and signed by the CRA.

[Pomponne] In other words you remain true to the agreement signed in Ouagadougou on 9 October?

[Boula] Yes, absolutely, but we are calling for the terms of this agreement to be implemented by the government side, and it is a question of the release of prisoners and people who were arrested [words indistinct]. A few timid releases [of prisoners] were carried out, but to this day the prisons of Niger are full of innocent people and prisoners who are still being held.

[Pomponne] You are in Ouagadougou today to negotiate on questions which were not looked at on 9 October. Are you going to continue with the negotiations on the points previously scheduled?

[Boula] That is what we have come for, to discuss the points on the agenda, because we believe that the two remaining points form an important pillar in resolving the distressing conflict which is tearing Niger apart today. [end recording]

Sierra Leone

Rebels Claim Downing of Military Plane

AB0404164595 Paris AFP in English 1404 GMT 4 Apr 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Abidjan, April 4 (AFP)—Rebels in Sierra Leone claimed Tuesday [4 April] to have

shot down a military plane carrying weaponry to Nigerian troops supporting the West African country's army in its war against them.

"RUF combattants shot down on Sunday night a military plane between Bo and Kenema carrying arms and ammunitions to supply the Nigerian contingent in the eastern part of the country," a spokesman for the Revolutionary United Front told reporters in Abidjan, in neighbouring Ivory Coast.

The spokesman, Alimamy Sankoh, did not say what kind of weapon the rebels had used in the attack, nor what kind of aircraft had been hit.

Some 2,000 Nigerian and Guinean troops are fighting alongside Sierra Leone's army under a joint defence pact.

On Monday, civil aviation authorities said a Cessna belonging to a Russian-owned private company had crashed on Friday close to the Kenema landing strip and the Russian pilot was killed.

Since it launched its insurrection in March 1991, the RUF led by renegade Corporal Foday Sankoh had never previously claimed to have shot down an aircraft.

Government Denies Rebel Claims

AB0404183095 Paris AFP in English 1717 GMT
4 Apr 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Freetown, April 4 (AFP)—The Sierra Leone Government Tuesday [4 April] denied claims by the rebel Revolutionary United Front (RUF) that it shot down an aircraft carrying arms and ammunition on Sunday.

In a statement the Department of Information in Freetown described the claim as "reckless and without foundation", saying "at no time was any aircraft ferrying arms and ammunition" across the war-torn state.

RUF political spokesman Alimamy Sankoh claimed Tuesday in Abidjan that "RUF combattants" shot down "a military plane" between the provincial cities of Bo and Kenema on April 2.

He claimed the aircraft was carrying arms and ammunition to supply a contingent of Nigerian soldiers in the eastern part of the country who are supporting Sierra Leone government forces.

On Monday, civil aviation authorities in Freetown said a Cessna light aircraft belonging to a Russian-owned private company had crashed over the weekend close to Kenema. The only person on board, Russian pilot Piotr Michel, was killed, they said.

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